



United States Department of State  
United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency  
*Office of Inspector General*

# Standards of Conduct

*A Guide to Ethical Conduct  
for Employees in the  
United States and Abroad*



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## Foreword

*Personal integrity and ethics, important as they are in every walk of daily life, are essential to those of us who serve the government because of the duty we owe the public trust. As government employees, each of us has a personal responsibility to maintain the honesty, integrity, and effectiveness of the Federal Government and to ensure that our conduct and performance meet the highest ethical standards. This means being courteous and responsive in our dealings with the public as well as refraining from conduct that is dishonest, immoral, criminal, or prejudicial to the interests of the U.S. Government. It requires that we respect the laws and standards of conduct not only of the United States, but of the other countries in which we may live and work.*

These words from the 1990 edition of *Standards of Conduct* are no less true today. As the Federal Government is reinvented, regulations reduced, and layers of supervision eliminated, the opportunities for misconduct and abuse of position, whether intentional or accidental, have increased accordingly. In such circumstances, it is essential that every employee observe the highest possible standards of personal integrity, avoiding even the suggestion of ethical misconduct.

This revision of *Standards of Conduct* is intended to assist employees of the Department of State and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in achieving that goal. It updates the information provided in the 1990 edition to reflect changes in law and regulation. As before, this publication is not intended to address the entire range of ethical issues that may arise at home and abroad. Questions involving specific situations or issues should be referred to the Department's Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel for guidance on the proper course of action. Conduct that appears to involve misconduct or violations of law or regulation should be reported to the appropriate management officials or to the Office of Inspector General Hotline. Pages 28-30 of this publication provide information on how to contact the Department's Assistant Legal Adviser, ACDA's Office of the General Council, and the Office of Inspector General.

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# Standards of Conduct

## A Guide to Ethical Conduct for Department of State Employees in the United States and Abroad

### What are the Standards of Ethical Conduct?

“Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.”

So begin the “Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Officers and Employees” signed by President George Bush on April 12, 1989, as Executive Order 12674. This executive order provided, for the first time, uniform standards of ethical conduct for all executive branch employees, including employees of the Department of State and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). On August 7, 1992, the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) issued the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (5 CFR Part 2635), which became effective on February 3, 1993.

The purpose of the standards is “to ensure that every citizen can have complete confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government.” To this end, Federal employees are required to:

- Place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain;
  - Put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties;
  - Disclose waste, fraud, abuse and corruption to appropriate authorities;
  - Adhere to all equal opportunity laws and regulations; and
  - Satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those imposed by law (i.e., taxes) or by court order (i.e., alimony or child support).
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Employees must not:

- Use public office for private gain;
- Use nonpublic government information in private financial transactions;
- Use Federal property for other than authorized purposes;
- Hold financial interests that conflict with the performance of their duties;
- Make unauthorized commitments purporting to bind the government;
- Engage in outside activities that conflict with their official government responsibilities;
- Give preferential treatment to any organization or person (except as required by laws, regulation, or U.S. Government policy; e.g., the “Buy American” or “Fly America” Acts);
- Solicit or accept gifts from persons or organizations whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance of the employee’s duties; or
- Engage in any activity that creates even the appearance that they are violating the law or ethical standards.

These standards apply to all executive branch officers and employees except enlisted members of the uniformed services. Applicability of the standards is not affected by your pay or leave status or, if you are a special government employee, by whether you perform your official duties on a given day. Uniform regulations relating to State, AID, ACDA, Agriculture, Commerce, and U.S. Information Agency employee responsibilities overseas are promulgated in the Foreign Affairs Manual at 3 FAM 4100.

Each agency has a designated ethics official responsible for managing the agency’s ethics program. Disciplinary action for violating the Standards of Ethical Conduct or any supplemental agency regulations will not be taken against an employee who has engaged in conduct in good faith on the advice of an agency’s ethics official, provided that the employee has made full disclosure of all relevant circumstances. Reliance on the advice of an ethics official cannot ensure that an employee will not be prosecuted if the employee’s conduct violates a criminal statute; however, good faith reliance on the official’s advice may be taken into account by the Department of Justice in selecting cases for prosecution. Disciplinary action may be taken when an employee “knew or should have known” they were violating standards of ethical conduct or any supplemental agency regulations and there is a demonstrated nexus to the efficiency of the service.

Your agency’s designated ethics official—the Department of State’s Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel and ACDA’s Office of the General Counsel are prepared to assist you with any questions you may have on the standards or their application. If you believe that someone has violated the Standards of Ethical Conduct, or any other law or regulation, you should notify the Office of Inspector General. Complete information on how to contact these offices is provided on pages 28–30.

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## Acceptance of Gifts, Favors, and Entertainment

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*While stationed abroad, you receive an expensive vase as an unsolicited gift from a foreign government official. Should you accept this gift?*

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There is a general prohibition against soliciting or accepting any item of monetary value, including gifts, favors, entertainment, or loans from anyone who appears to be offering the item of monetary value because of your official status or position. In addition, neither you nor members of your immediate family may solicit or accept any such gifts, favors, entertainment, or loans, from the following prohibited sources:

- Anyone who is seeking official action by the Department or ACDA;
- Anyone who has, or is seeking to obtain, contractual or other business or financial relations with the Department of State or one of its overseas posts;
- Anyone who conducts operations or activities that are regulated or supported by the Department of State, one of its overseas posts, or ACDA;
- Anyone who has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of your official duties;
- Any organization, a majority of whose members are a prohibited source.

There are several exceptions<sup>1</sup> to these rules. You may accept:

- Food, entertainment, or other gifts worth \$20 or less on a single occasion, provided that the total value of gifts from a single source does not exceed \$50 in a calendar year. You may not retain a gift by paying the value in excess of \$20. However, in the case of several gifts whose aggregate value is more than \$20, you may accept one or more individual items with a total value of \$20 or less. Cash in any amount may not be accepted.
- Gifts, favors, or entertainment that are motivated by an obvious family or personal relationship, provided that it is not paid for on a business expense account.
- Widely attended gatherings when there has been a determination that it is in the interest of the Department to attend.
- Gifts based on your spouse's outside employment when it is clear that the gift is not offered because of your official position.
- Reasonable travel expenses in connection with job interviews while on annual leave.

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptions are subject to certain limitations on their use and, in a number of instances, require agency approval or have other conditions attached to them that must be met before they can be used.



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There are a number of exclusions<sup>2</sup> from these rules. For example, you may accept:

- Greeting cards and unsolicited advertising items with little intrinsic value such as plaques, certificates, and trophies which are intended solely for presentation.
- Certain discounts and similar benefits offered to Department of State or ACDA employees as members of a group.
- Anything for which you pay the entire market value.
- Loans from banks and other financial institutions on terms generally available to the public.
- Rewards and prizes in contests or events open to the public unless entry into the contest or event is required as part of an employee's official duties.
- Modest items of food or refreshments, such as soft drinks, coffee, doughnuts, offered other than as part of a meal. Special rules for accepting meals, refreshments, and entertainment from private individuals and organizations in foreign areas by employees assigned to duty in, or official travel to, a foreign area, permit acceptance where the market value of the gifts does not exceed the per diem rate for that area, there is participation by non-U.S. citizens or representatives of foreign governments, the employee's attendance is part of his or her official duties, and the gift is not from a foreign government.

Under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, you may accept an unsolicited gift from a foreign government (including a meal or entertainment), provided that it is of minimal value (currently \$225 or less), that it is tendered and received as a souvenir or a mark of courtesy, and that does not otherwise constitute a real or perceived conflict of interest. A gift from a foreign government of more than minimal value may be accepted when its refusal would likely cause offense or embarrassment or otherwise adversely affect the foreign relations of the United States. Such gifts are deemed to be accepted on behalf of the United States and become its property. You may also accept a gift from a foreign government of travel or of expenses for travel, taking place entirely outside the United States, when specifically authorized in advance by the Department of State or ACDA. You must be issued official travel orders providing for acceptance in connection with the authorized purpose of the travel. If you are normally the approving authority for such travel, authorization of reimbursement for your own travel should be approved by another appropriate official. (Further information on travel reimbursement from private sources is provided on pages 6–7.)

The uniform regulations governing employee responsibilities overseas provide authority to accept gifts (other than meals, refreshments, or entertainment) by a private individual or organization on behalf of their agency if refusal, reimbursement, or return would cause offense, embarrassment, or otherwise affect foreign relations of the United States.

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<sup>2</sup> Exclusions are not considered gifts and, accordingly, are not subject to limitations on their use.



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The Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (subpart B) include provisions for returning or otherwise disposing of unacceptable gifts. These include returning the gift, paying the donor its market value, or accepting a perishable gift on behalf of the U.S. Government for use in government facilities or to give to charity. Perishable gifts may, at the discretion of the chief of mission or agency ethics official, be donated to charity, shared within the office, or destroyed. Where questions about proper acceptance or disposal exist, you should seek guidance from the State Department's Office of Protocol or your agency's designated ethics official.

Accepting certain gifts may violate criminal statutes. For example, gifts made to induce or to compensate employees for official actions may violate the bribery provision of Section 201 of Title 18 of the United States Code (18 U.S.C. 201). The acts of giving, offering, or accepting a bribe and of extortion are criminal activities covered by the Federal criminal code.

In addition, 18 U.S.C. 209 prohibits U.S. Government employees from receiving salary or any item of monetary value from a private source in compensation for their services to the U.S. Government or as a supplement to their Government salaries.

## Gifts to Supervisors and Colleagues

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*Your office decides to take up a gift collection for your boss, who is being promoted within the office. Since a continuing workplace relationship is involved, is it proper for you to solicit contributions for such a gift?*

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No. You may not solicit a contribution from another employee for a gift to an official superior or as a donation to a supervisor. Furthermore, you may not accept a gift from an employee whose salary is less than your own, except in the cases noted below.

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*Your office decides to take up a gift collection for your boss, who is departing post. Is it proper for you to contribute to such a gift?*

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Yes. Exceptions to the above restrictions exist for voluntary gifts (i.e., gifts for which no explicit or implicit pressure can be applied). On infrequent occasions of personal significance, such as marriage, birth, illness, or to mark an

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employee's transfer, resignation, or retirement, employees may give and accept gifts appropriate to the occasion and they may make or solicit voluntary contributions of nominal amounts for group gifts. In soliciting such contributions it must be made clear that an employee is free to contribute less than a recommended amount or nothing at all.

Gifts given as part of an obvious personal relationship are acceptable, even if a professional relationship also exists provided there is no subordinate-official superior relationship. Nominal individual gifts (with a value of \$10 or less) also may be given on an occasional basis, on occasions such as birthdays when gifts are traditionally exchanged.

You may also donate annual leave, as provided by the Department's leave-sharing procedures, without regard to your rank or that of the recipient, except you may not donate leave to your immediate supervisor.

## Travel Reimbursement from Private Sources

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*A private corporation offers to pay your travel costs to attend a conference that it is sponsoring. Can you accept this offer?*

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The propriety of accepting such an offer depends upon the circumstances. Generally, you are not allowed to accept direct reimbursement for travel in the United States or abroad from sources other than the U.S. Government. Travel reimbursement may be accepted from an outside source on behalf of the U.S. Government only in connection with official duties, provided it does not constitute a conflict of interest or an appearance thereof. Such travel must be approved in advance by your bureau's executive director, or by the Bureau of Public Affairs or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel if it is in connection with a speaking engagement and must meet specific guidelines:

- Any authorized reimbursement from outside sources should be paid directly to the Department of State or ACDA, not to the employee.
- In cases where it would be impractical for the Department or ACDA to pay for your approved travel (e.g., commercial transportation is not readily available), provision of in-kind arrangements may be accepted. Travel offered to a group of members of the diplomatic corps to visit a government project would be an example of such a case.
- Travel orders must reflect authorization to accept travel gifts from foreign governments or expenses for travel outside the United States.
- Prior to acceptance, you must inform the State Department's Bureau of Public Affairs or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel of all personal invita-

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tions to speak, lecture, or participate in a conference on a subject of official concern while on official duty in the United States. The Bureau of Public Affairs or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel may authorize direct reimbursement of travel or in-kind arrangements.

- At foreign posts, the ambassador or the ambassador's designee should approve all invitations for post personnel to speak, lecture, or participate in conferences on subjects of official concern while on official duty.
- You may accept meals, lodging, transportation, and other benefits resulting from the business or employment activities of your spouse when it is clear that such benefits have not been offered or enhanced because of your official position.

If you are uncertain about the propriety of accepting travel reimbursement in specific circumstances, you should seek advice from your post administrative section or bureau executive director, the Department's Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel, or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel.

## Travel Gratuities and Benefits

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*After representing your office at a series of official overseas conferences, you find that you have amassed enough "frequent flyer" credits for an additional round trip to Europe. May you use these credits to take your spouse with you to the next conference?*

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Sorry. Except as noted below, you may not accept for personal use any gifts, gratuities, or benefits received from private sources as a result of travel undertaken at government expense. This includes bonus flights, reduced-fare coupons, cash, merchandise, gifts, and credits toward free or reduced costs of future services or goods given to travelers by airlines, rental car agencies, hotels, and motels. When you receive benefits of this nature as a result of official travel, you are accepting them on behalf of the Department of State or ACDA and must relinquish them to the Department or ACDA.

Specific benefits covered by these guidelines include:

**Bonus tickets:** If the government paid for your travel, any bonus ticket—even one that carries an expiration date or that is not transferable—must be turned over to ACDA, to the Department, or to your post of assignment, as appropriate. Only your agency or post may make a decision on appropriate official use of the ticket.

**Mileage credits:** Some airlines give travel credit based on the total air mileage that you accumulate while traveling. To qualify, you usually are

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required to enroll in an airline’s “frequent flyer” program. Travel funded by the government may not be used for personal travel benefits under a “frequent flyer” program; it may be used to upgrade tickets for subsequent official travel, but only to a class of travel that the employee is otherwise authorized to use.

**Personal perquisites:** You may take advantage of free, unsolicited upgrades to business-class service, membership in airline clubs, check cashing, and similar privileges, unless you have reason to believe that these perquisites have been offered because of your government position or because of the donor’s interests before the U.S. Government.

**Deminimus gifts:** You may keep complimentary pens, pencil, notepads, calendars, and other promotional items valued at \$20 or less.

**Vacating a seat:** If you are bumped from a flight while on official travel, you may retain compensation payments only to the extent that you incur additional travel expenses and do not receive reimbursement from the Government for those expenses. Any compensation in excess of these additional expenses must be paid to the Department or ACDA. You should not voluntarily relinquish your seat if doing so would impinge upon the performance of your official duties.

The use of travel benefits and gratuities is an issue fraught with potential ethical pitfalls and one that is subject to periodic change. You should consult your agency’s designated ethics official for current guidance on any action about which you have questions.

## Financial Interests and Activities

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*A corporation in which you own stock may be affected by a matter in which you participate as a U.S. Government official. What should you do?*

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Before you participate in such a matter, you should consult with an ethics official to determine the best course of action for dealing with this conflict. It may be necessary for you to sell the stock. Or it may be possible to resolve this conflict by signing a statement recusing yourself from participation in the matter. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to obtain a waiver from the conflict of interest statute from the Department’s Legal Adviser or ACDA’s Office of the General Counsel, as described below.

Generally, you cannot personally participate as a government employee in a matter in which you have a financial interest. There is no minimum amount of value or control that constitutes a financial interest. This prohibition also

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applies if any of the following individuals or organizations have a financial interest in the matter:

- Your spouse, minor child, or general partner;
- An organization in which you serve as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, or employee; or
- A person or organization with which you are negotiating for employment.

Under certain circumstances, you may be required to sign a statement recusing yourself if your financial interests, or those of your spouse, minor child, or general partner, might be implicated in a matter involving your personal participation as a government employee. You may obtain advice on doing so from the Department's Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel. In cases where your interests are not so substantial as to affect the integrity of your official duties, you may seek, in advance, a written waiver of the conflict of interest from the Legal Adviser or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel.

If your financial interests would prevent you from fulfilling essential duties, however, the Department or ACDA may require you to divest those financial interests. If you must divest, you are allowed a reasonable period, not to exceed 90 days, to do so. You may also qualify for deferral of capital gains taxes if you obtain a certificate of divestiture prior to divesting. Certificates of divestiture may be requested from the Office of Government Ethics through the Department's Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel.

## Financial Activities While Stationed Abroad

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*As you prepare to depart post, a foreign citizen offers to purchase your American car for more than twice the amount you paid for it in the United States. You would be able to replace your car with a brand new model upon returning home and still have a nice profit remaining. Can you accept this offer?*

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Yes. You may sell your car, but you may only retain from the proceeds of the sale the basic cost of the car (including the initial price paid, transportation or shipping costs, as well as any taxes, custom fees, or capital improvements). The balance must be donated to a charitable organization, as designated under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, or to a local charitable organization.

In addition, if you are a U.S. citizen government employee traveling or serving abroad, you and your immediate family are prohibited from certain

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activities in your country of assignment, including:

- Selling or disposing of personal property, which was imported or acquired tax-free under diplomatic privilege, for profit or in violation of local law or mission policy, including the importation or tax-free purchase of property primarily for the purpose of resale. An exception exists for sales to other diplomats;
- Speculating in currency exchange;
- Engaging in currency transactions at exchange rates other than the legal, locally available rate;
- Selling to unauthorized persons, either at cost or for profit, currency acquired at preferential rates through diplomatic or other restricted arrangements;
- Engaging in transactions entailing the use, without official sanction, of the diplomatic pouch or other official mail;
- Engaging in unauthorized private transactions that violate applicable currency control regulations of the foreign government;
- Engaging in the transfers of blocked funds in violation of U.S. foreign funds and assets controls;
- Acting as an intermediary in the transfer of private funds from one country to another, including the United States;
- Permitting use of your official title in any private business transaction or in advertisements for business purposes;
- Investing in real estate or mortgages on properties located in the employee's country of assignment, except for the purchase of a house and land for personal occupancy during your assignment or upon retirement, if approved by the chief of mission;
- Transacting, or having an interest in, any business; engaging in any profession for profit; or undertaking other gainful employment outside the U.S. Embassy community unless approved by ACDA's Office of the General Counsel, by the chief of mission, or by the Department's Under Secretary for Management. For employment rules related to teaching, see pages 13.
- Family members abroad may accept employment while stationed abroad unless such employment would violate local law, require an unacceptably broad waiver of diplomatic immunity, or otherwise damage the interests of the United States as determined by the chief of mission; or
- Investing in bonds, shares, or stocks of commercial concerns headquartered or conducting a substantial portion of their business in the country to which you are assigned. (If such investments were held prior to knowledge of your country of assignment, it may be possible for you to receive permission from the chief of mission to retain them. If so, you could not act on matters that would affect those interests. They may not be sold during the course of your assignment without prior written approval from the chief of mission).

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## Impartiality in Performing Official Duties

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*As embassy administrative officer, you review and approve a solicitation for bids on an embassy maintenance contract. The embassy maintenance contract is up for renewal, and your cousin, with whom you have a close personal relationship, is representing the company that is seeking renewal of its contract. What should you do when the contract comes before you for your review?*

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Where a person with whom you have a “covered relationship” is or represents a party to a particular matter involving specific parties, and where you determine that a reasonable person with a knowledge of the relevant facts would question your impartiality in the matter, you should not participate in the matter unless you receive authorization to do so.

Covered relationships include relatives with whom an employee has a close personal relationship such as your cousin in this case. Your cousin is representing a party to a particular matter involving specific parties, namely the renewal of a contract. Therefore, you would be required to consider whether a reasonable person would question your impartiality. In this case, a reasonable person probably would question your impartiality, so you should not work on this matter without proper authorization.

There are other categories of persons with whom you have a “covered relationship.” They include members of your household and persons with whom you have or seek certain business, contractual, or financial relationships that involve other than a routine consumer transaction. Also included are persons whom your spouse, parent, or dependent child serves or seeks to serve in certain employment or fiduciary capacities, and an organization in which you are an active participant. You also have a “covered relationship” with persons whom you have, within the last year, served as officer, director, trustee, general partner, agent, attorney, consultant, contractor, or employee.

Finally, you are also required to consider whether your impartiality would be questioned where you know that a particular matter involving specific parties is likely to have a direct and predictable effect on the financial interest of a member of your household. You should seek the assistance of your supervisor, agency ethics official, or agency designee in considering whether your participation in a particular matter involving specific parties would cause a reasonable person to question your impartiality.



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## Financial Disclosure

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*The most recent selection boards have promoted you to class FE-OC, and your bureau's executive officer has sent you a Financial Disclosure Report form. Do you have to fill it out?*

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Yes. Chiefs of mission, members of the Senior Foreign Service and Senior Executive Service, and certain other Department and ACDA employees are required to submit Form SF-278, Executive Personnel Financial Disclosure Report, in connection with their nomination or appointment. In addition, you must resubmit Form SF-278 by May 15 of each year to cover personal and family financial activities during the previous calendar year, as well as a final report upon termination of service.

Furthermore, all covered employees (check with your bureau or post) are required to report their financial holdings by filing Form SF-450, Executive Branch Confidential Financial Disclosure Report, by October 31st of each year.

Gifts from foreign governments should be treated in the same manner as any other reportable gift on Form SF-278 or Form SF-450, unless a report to the Department's Office of Protocol has been made under the Foreign Gifts Act, as amended. The requirement for you to report such gifts is independent of any rules or restrictions regarding the propriety of acceptance. (For more details on reporting gifts, see pages 3–5 and 27-28).

## Use of Government Information

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*You learn in a meeting with the Minister of Mines and Petroleum that the host government is about to grant a concession to an American firm. You advise your mother to purchase stock in the firm. Is this acceptable?*

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No. You may not use or permit others to use information not available to the general public for the purpose of furthering a private interest. Such "insider" information must not be used to engage in financial transactions to further your own private interest or that of another, whether through advice, recommendation, or unauthorized disclosure.

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## Fees for Speaking, Writing, or Teaching

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*As a result of your job, you become an expert on Middle Eastern affairs. Because of the high visibility of this issue, a private organization asks you to address its members at a conference. To make the invitation more attractive, you are offered a fee of \$5,000 for speaking. Can you accept this offer?*

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You may give the address (with prior approval from the Department or ACDA), but you may not accept the fee. The Department of State and ACDA encourage participation by their employees and members of their families in responsible, nonpartisan activities such as public speaking, writing, teaching, and participating in symposia devoted to increasing public study and understanding of the nation's foreign relations.

U.S. Government employees may not accept honoraria for any speaking or writing related to their official duties. Exceptions to these restrictions exist if you are teaching a series of classes offered as part of the regularly established curriculum of an accredited educational institution or as part of a training or educational program sponsored and funded by Federal, state, or local government. However, you may not permit your official title to be used to promote any course, article, or speech. Prior review and clearance by the Department's Bureau of Public Affairs or ACDA's Office of Public Affairs are required for any speech you intend to give or manuscript you intend to publish related to the mission of your particular agency.

Under Executive Order 12674, full-time noncareer employees appointed by the President may not receive income for any outside employment or activity performed during their presidential appointment.

For teaching activities of certain foreign affairs agency U.S. citizen employees overseas, you may receive reasonable compensation if the course is part of an extension program of an accredited U.S. degree-granting institution or is offered by a private foreign university that is not state supported, and if such teaching is consistent with the local law of the host country. Department of State and ACDA employees must obtain chief of mission approval.

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## Outside Employment While in the United States

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*You are employed by the State Department or ACDA as a computer analyst. You decide to do consulting work for several companies that require specialized software. Your government position has nothing to do with software development. Is there a conflict of interest?*

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Probably not, but check all the criteria below. In the United States, you may engage in outside employment, with or without compensation, but only if it will not adversely affect or conflict with, or appear to adversely affect or conflict with, your official duties. (See page 11 for a discussion of outside employment while stationed abroad.) Such work may include civic, charitable, religious, community undertakings, and for-profit business arrangements. Specifically, you may not engage in outside employment that:

- Creates a real or apparent conflict of interest (i.e., that relates directly to your official responsibilities);
- Requires your disqualification from matters critical to the performance of your duties;
- Tends to impair your mental or physical capacity to perform your government duties acceptably or that requires you to take time from those duties during working hours;
- Is likely to cause embarrassment to the Department of State or ACDA;
- Involves the use for private interest of official information not available to the general public that has been obtained in connection with your U.S. Government service; and
- Involves service to any foreign government, state, province, quasi-governmental agency, municipality, any international organization of states, except when acting officially on behalf of the U.S. Government.

You should seek the approval of your supervisor if any relationship exists, or may be perceived to exist, between your proposed outside employment and your official duties. The Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel should also be consulted if any question exists.

As previously stated, limitations on outside earned income exist for certain presidential appointees and noncareer employees of the Department. For specifics, you should consult the Department's Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel, or ACDA's Office of Legal Counsel.

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## Postemployment Activities

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*You have recently retired from a senior position in the Department of State, and a private consulting firm has offered you a position as head of the division that is bidding for a contract with your old bureau. May you accept this position?*

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Yes, but you also may be limited in your dealings with the Department of State once you accept the position. Law and regulations restrict the activities of former Federal employees based on their past involvement in particular matters while with the Government. Violation of these laws may result in criminal prosecution. Specifically, 18 U.S.C. Section 207 restricts former employees from representing or acting as an agent or attorney for private parties when the former employee, with an intent to influence, seeks to communicate or appear before their former agency on matters in which they participated personally and substantially or which were formerly under their official responsibility. These restrictions can last from 1 year to a lifetime ban against such communications, depending upon the level of involvement. See your agency ethics official for further guidance. The purpose of these restrictions is to preclude the use of public office for private gain and to ensure that U.S. Government activities are conducted honestly and in an impartial manner.

No law or regulation forbids employment of former government personnel by a corporation or concern doing business with the U.S. Government. You may use general professional knowledge acquired during Federal service while you are employed in the private sector. If you are a senior executive branch appointee or trade negotiator appointed after January 20, 1993, you must sign a pledge agreeing, among other restrictions, not to lobby any officer or employee of the Department of State, ACDA, or any other executive agency for a period of five years after the conclusion of your government service or to act as a representative of any foreign government, business, or other entity. However, these new rules do not apply to career government employees.

In addition to the above restrictions, you may not improperly disclose or use, either for profit or otherwise, classified and other sensitive, nonpublic information acquired during your employment with the U.S. Government. Furthermore, representation of a foreign interest, even if otherwise permitted, may require registration with and notification to the Department of Justice.

Note: This is a complex area of the law. The restrictions are invoked when a former employee acts as an agent or attorney for, or otherwise represents a person or organization in an appearance, or communicates with the intent to influence the former agency. The length of time these restrictions apply depends on whether the former employee was a “senior employee” and was officially responsible for or participated personally and substantially, while

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employed with the U.S. Government, in a matter of interest to the new employer. For further guidance on such matters, you should consult the Department's Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel.

## Procurement Integrity

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*You are posted overseas as an administrative officer, and some of your household effects must be stored at post for a period longer than that authorized by the Foreign Affairs Manual. The manager of the local company that holds the embassy's contract for shipment and storage of goods offers to keep your household effects in storage beyond the authorized date at no additional cost. Is this appropriate?*

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Absolutely not. As a procurement official responsible for government procurement of property or services, you may not knowingly request or accept any money, gratuity, or other item or service of value from a representative of any contractor competing for such a procurement. You are also prohibited from:

- Soliciting or accepting any promise of future employment or business opportunity from, or engaging in any discussion of future employment or business opportunity with, a representative of a firm offering contractual services to the Department of State or ACDA; or
- Disclosing any proprietary or source selection information regarding procurement decisions to any person other than those authorized by the head of an agency or the contracting officer to receive such information.

In addition, if you have participated substantially in any procurement by the Department of State or ACDA or if you have reviewed and approved the award, modification, or extension of any procurement contract, you are restricted, for a period of 2 years from the date of your last involvement, from:

- Participating in any manner as a representative of a competing contractor in any negotiations leading to the award, modification, or extension of a procurement contract; or
- Participating personally and substantially on behalf of the competing contractor in the performance of such a contract.

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## Personal Use of Government Property and Resources

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*You need to write to your real estate agent in Maryland because your tenant has moved out without notice. You also need to instruct an attorney to collect damage from the tenant. You ask your secretary to type the letters when she has free time. As long as you don't interfere with your secretary's performance of official work, is there anything wrong with your actions?*

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Yes. Secretaries, or any other members of the staff, are employed to perform official duties. They should not be asked or directed to perform personal favors such as typing nonofficial correspondence and running personal errands, nor should government property be used in conducting personal business. These prohibitions apply to all U.S. Government facilities, property, and staff, whether you are stationed in the United States or abroad. You should not use U.S. Government resources for personal use, such as:

- Telephones for personal long-distance calls, unless sanctioned by the post, with costs recorded and promptly reimbursed to the Government;
- Stationery of any sort, obviously including postage-paid envelopes, for personal correspondence;
- Computers, or other office equipment for personal purposes (although you may use them to prepare a paper for a professional organization related to your duties);
- Chauffeur services for home-to-office transportation, except as authorized in writing by the chief of mission (domestically, very few Department officials are authorized home-to-office transportation, including the Secretary of State and the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.);
- Official credit cards for unauthorized personal expenses;
- Office credentials to obtain for private purposes information or access to facilities for improper purposes;
- Vehicles for personal purposes, whether government-owned, leased, or rented, except as authorized abroad by published mission policy and paid for as required (chiefs of mission are given some discretionary authority to make exceptions at Foreign Service posts, particularly for reasons of personal security);
- Travel authorizations, purchase orders, or other negotiable instruments for personal business; or
- Facilities for a nonofficial project (e.g., conducting personal experiments in a government laboratory, selling commercial products in a government building, or operating a private business from a government office).

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## Time, Attendance, Overtime, and Leave

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*Your timekeeper fails to record on time cards an office colleague's absences from the office for medical treatments. The certifying officer routinely signs the time cards without examining them. What should you do?*

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You should raise with the certifying officer the timekeeper's failure to report all sick leave taken in the office and the certifying officer's need to fully examine the time cards before signing them. If this fails to correct the situation, you should discuss the problem with the certifying officer's supervisor. If the situation persists, call the OIG Hotline.

Abuse in the recording of time worked, overtime, and leave represents one of the most prevalent frauds against the U.S. Government, resulting in significant loss to the government each year. It is also one of the easiest to prevent by following established guidelines and procedures for recording and processing time and attendance. These include:

- Approval for leave by the proper approving official (reported to the designated timekeeper on Form SF-71).
- Paid overtime authorized and approved only by designated management officials and, when possible, in advance.
- Under certain provisions, compensatory time off granted in lieu of payment for overtime.
- Compensatory time off taken as specified by appropriate directives. If compensatory time off cannot be used for reasons outside the control of the employee, overtime compensation may be paid instead.

Timekeepers and certifying officers should also be aware that the Fair Labor Standards Act exempts certain employees from the overtime provisions of the Act.

## Allowances

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*While posted at a danger and hardship post, you leave on a 10-day temporary duty assignment in Geneva, Switzerland. When you receive your pay slip, you realize that the administrative section has failed to deduct the danger pay from your salary for the 10-day period that you were out of country. What are your responsibilities under these circumstances?*

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You should advise the administrative section of the situation. You may not receive danger pay during a period that you are not present at a danger post. You may, however, continue to receive hardship differential during absences of up to 42 days, provided the period of absence is not spent in the United States. You should consult your post's administrative staff if you have questions about regulations governing specific circumstances or types of allowances.

Nearly all employees assigned abroad are entitled to allowances of one type or another. It is to your benefit as well as that of the government that you become familiar with the general requirements and provisions of any allowances that you receive. The collection of U.S. Government funds to which you know or should know you are not entitled, or of funds that are gained through false information, is a fraud against the U.S. Government. Even inadvertent receipt of incorrectly paid funds may result in a demand for repayment once the error is realized. You should notify the administrative officer immediately if you are aware of changes in your circumstances that may affect the amount of the allowances to which you are entitled.

Chiefs of mission and other employees receiving or administering allowances should become familiar with the regulations governing the various discretionary funds, such as official residence expenses and representational allowances, for which they have a special responsibility. It is a good idea to discuss these rules with the administrative officer and disbursing officer soon after arrival at post in order to address possible questions and problems regarding appropriate application and documentation.

## Accommodation Exchange

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*You are leaving post and ask the embassy cashier to convert the proceeds from the sale of your car, furniture, and appliances into dollars. The cashier refuses unless you provide an itemized list of the items sold and their original value. Is the cashier right?*

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An accommodation exchange is a convenience and a privilege provided at post to assist employees and official visitors to convert dollars to and from the local currency. Conversion of local currency to dollars is most useful to employees who are preparing to depart a post and wish to convert local currency accumulated through the sale of personal possessions, including privately owned vehicles. To prevent abuse of this privilege and to discourage attempts to profit from the sale of personal property, the chief of mission may establish strict but reasonable controls, including limits on the amount of local currency that may be exchanged for dollars and certification of the original value of the items being sold.

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## Favoritism and Nepotism

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*You are the spouse of the deputy chief of mission (DCM). You are selected as the best candidate to serve as the community liaison officer (CLO), and you are consequently hired. Is this allowable?*

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Because of the sensitivity of questions involving the employment of senior officers' spouses in certain jobs at posts, the Department of State Bureau of Personnel created alternative employment arrangements that would allow more flexibility to appoint the DCM's spouse as CLO. The policy requires that, if the DCM's spouse is selected as the CLO or for a similar position, the chief of mission must agree to assume full supervisory responsibility, including preparation of performance evaluations, for the CLO. In addition, post management must ensure that the CLO position was advertised, that all candidates were fairly considered for the job by an independent post committee, and that no pressure was exerted by the DCM or anyone else to influence the selection.

Nepotism is against the law. Opportunities for employment or access to services or benefits should be based on publicly announced criteria. The post's personnel officer or CLO will normally serve as the conduit for such information to the community at post.

Use of an interagency employment committee at post to set job requirement standards, make job announcements, and select the best qualified candidates will help guard against any appearance of favoritism or nepotism. Senior post management must ensure that the committee's deliberations are free from interference, explicit or implicit.

Chiefs of mission and other senior officials must avoid the fact or the appearance of favoritism or nepotism with respect to:

- Assignments;
- Allocation of housing;
- Access to scarce resources;
- Travel opportunities; or
- Any other action that might seem to grant preferential treatment.

In the performance evaluation process, you may not be the rating officer or the reviewing officer for a family member. If a family member is working for someone you supervise, special arrangements must be made so that the reviewing officer responsibilities are performed by another person.

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## Participation in Politics

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*At election time, a neighbor involved in national partisan politics stops by your home with promotional materials—buttons and bumper stickers—for a party candidate and asks you to distribute these items in the neighborhood and at the office. Is this activity permissible?*

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Yes, in the neighborhood; not at the office.

With very few exceptions, the political activities of all executive branch employees are limited by the Hatch Act, which prohibits Federal employees from actively participating in partisan politics. On October 6, 1993, the President signed a bill which amended the Hatch Act. The legislation took effect on February 6, 1994.

Under the new Hatch Act amendments, you may not:

- Use your official authority or influence to interfere with an election;
- Knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person who has business before the agency;
- Engage in political activity while on duty, in any government office, or while using a government vehicle;
- Be a candidate for public office in partisan elections;
- Solicit, accept or receive political contributions from the general public.

However, you may:

- Register and vote;
- Assist in partisan and nonpartisan voter registration drives;
- Express opinions about political candidates and issues;
- Participate or be candidates for public office in nonpartisan campaigns;
- Contribute money to political organizations;
- Attend political fund-raising activities;
- Wear or display political badges, buttons, or stickers;
- Attend political rallies and meetings;
- Join and hold office in political clubs or parties;
- Campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections; and
- Make campaign speeches, and distribute campaign literature for or against candidates in partisan elections.

Chiefs of mission, and certain other senior officials appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, who have “national” policymaking

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responsibilities are not subject to all of the restrictions of the Hatch Act. Nevertheless, it has long been the tradition that all employees of the Department of State and ACDA, including ambassadors, are discouraged from extensive and, particularly, public participation in partisan politics. More detailed guidance on what is considered permissible partisan political activity for ambassadors is provided in Department of State cable 92 STATE 111791. Additional questions on the ambassadorial exemption should be addressed to the Office of the Legal Adviser at the Department of State or to the Office of Special Counsel at the address given on page 30.

In addition to the above restrictions on involvement in U.S. partisan politics, if you are a U.S. citizen Federal employee, you and members of your immediate family may not become personally involved in the partisan politics of the host country to which you are assigned.

## Participation in Private Organizations

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*You are elected president of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) at your daughter's school. To enhance the organization's prestige, you want to use your official government title when signing PTA correspondence. Is this appropriate?*

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No. You may not use your official title on a letterhead, in a publication, or in any manner that employs the prestige of the U.S. Government to enhance that of the organization or to imply official sponsorship. However, if you are a representative of an employee association or of a group of employees, employment by the Department of State or ACDA may be stated, as long as there is no implication of official sponsorship.

Whether or not you may participate in private organizations depends upon the circumstances. At one extreme, the law prohibits membership in any organization that advocates the overthrow of the constitutional form of government in the United States. At the other extreme, the law protects the rights of employees to join, or to refrain from joining, employee or labor organizations and associations.

In general, your participation in professional organizations is in the best interests of yourself and of the U.S. Government. However:

- You, and members of your immediate family, must generally participate in such organizations in a private capacity; and
- The organization must not assume or claim any connection with the U.S. Government.

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Employees should restrict to simple membership their association with any organization primarily concerned with foreign affairs or international relations. Unless official approval is obtained in advance from the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Personnel or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel, employees should not accept any honorary or other office or position with such an organization, nor should they authorize their names to be used on such an organization's letterhead or to further any private interest.

## CHIEFS OF MISSION

While the situations already discussed affect the majority of Department of State and ACDA employees, certain ethical issues require particular attention by chiefs of mission and other senior officers.

### Abuse of Position

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*Is it an abuse of position for the chief of mission to direct that his driver take his official car to pick up aunts, uncles, and cousins at the airport when they come to visit because he cannot make it?*

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Yes. Chiefs of mission have great responsibilities and have been delegated great authority. The greater the authority, the greater the risk that it will be abused, consciously or unconsciously, directly or by derivation. It may be difficult, however, to determine where appropriate prerogatives end and abuse begins. Violations of the other standards of conduct discussed in this booklet may also involve abuses of position. But because the traditional hierarchical structure of diplomatic missions makes abuse so easy, because avoiding the abuse of the position requires diligence on the part of the chief of mission, and because such abuse can harm mission morale and effectiveness, the ethical responsibilities of chiefs of mission merit special attention.

The ambassador's spouse who mentions that the dining room might look better in gray and is "surprised" to find the painters at the residence while painting at other homes has ceased; the DCM who directs the purchasing or refurbishing of furnishings for the DCM or chief of mission residence without regard to condition or priorities while other families are forced to do without; the administrative officer whose house is in perfect order while others are allowed to fall into disrepair, the chief of mission who directs that

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his driver take his official car to pick up Aunt Ruth at the airport because he cannot make it, are all guilty of abuse of position.

Chiefs of mission must make clear, as soon as possible after arrival at post, that they have no intention of abusing the authorities delegated to them by the President and that they will not abide others doing so on their behalf. In particular, chiefs of mission must not give the impression that laws, regulations, or sound management practices must or may be violated in order to accommodate their wishes. They must be rigorous in insisting upon proper standards of management and conduct, and they must be constantly alert to ensure that such standards are maintained.

## Absence from Post and Leave

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*You want to take advantage of the three-day weekend made possible by a local holiday on Monday to visit a neighboring country easily accessible from your post; but you do not want to bother notifying the regional bureau in Washington because you are afraid they will advise against it, given the increased security threat in the country to be visited. Is such notification really necessary?*

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Except in emergencies, chiefs of mission are required to obtain the permission of the Department before departing their country or post of assignment. Absences from the post of assignment, even while within the country of assignment, should be reported to the Department in advance if the chief of mission will be beyond the range of easy, rapid communication with the Department or the post.

Unlike other Department employees, chiefs of mission and other presidential appointees are not subject to the provisions of the Annual and Sick Leave Act of 1951, as amended. They do not accumulate leave and are not charged leave for their absences from duty. (However, career Foreign Service officers named to chief of mission or other presidentially appointed positions prior to December 22, 1987, may have chosen the option, then available to them, of remaining subject to the provisions of the leave act.)

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## Budget

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*The swimming pool at your residence has no changing facilities. This has proven to be extremely inconvenient for your guests. The Department has been unwilling to provide funding to build any. You have concluded that your only recourse is to ask the Embassy to fund the construction of a modest 2-room facility from its maintenance account, postponing some maintenance projects until later. Is this proper?*

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Probably not. Chiefs of mission should acquaint themselves thoroughly with the strict laws and regulations that prohibit the expenditure or obligation of official funds without proper prior authorization, particularly the so-called “Antideficiency Act.” Money is appropriated and subsequently allotted to posts in specific amounts for a specified period of time (usually one year) and for a specific purpose. These restrictions of amount, time, and purpose apply to all appropriated funds and determine how these funds are to be spent. The obligation or expenditure of funds for a purpose or in a fiscal year other than that for which they were appropriated is a violation of law.

Employees who sign obligation documents certifying that funds are available when they are not can be held criminally and financially liable for those funds. While chiefs of mission do not typically sign obligation documents, it is ultimately their responsibility to ensure that any subordinates who do are scrupulous in their observance of the “Antideficiency Act” and other pertinent rules and regulations.

## Orders for Official or Medical Leave

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*Is it appropriate for a chief of mission to request travel for his son to return to the United States for nonemergency treatment without checking with the regional medical officer or determining whether adequate medical care is available in their country of assignment?*

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No. Chiefs of mission should adhere meticulously to regulations when requesting orders for official or medical travel for themselves or members of their families. Subordinates at post who are responsible for preparing such orders may be reticent to question a request from the chief of mission, even when they think that the request does not conform to regulations. The best



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way to ensure high ethical conduct throughout the post is for the chief of mission to make clear that all laws and regulations are to be applied without regard to rank or position and to develop a frank and open relationship with subordinates so that they will feel free to offer advice when they believe the chief of mission or other senior officers are in danger of abusing their roles.

## Visa Referrals

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*A cabinet minister has asked you to facilitate the issuance of a visitor's visa for a cousin who wants to go to the United States to visit friends and look at American universities. You do not know the cousin but you feel it important enough to your relationship with the minister, and it could benefit U.S. foreign policy goals, to ask the visa section to issue the visa. Is this appropriate?*

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Yes. However, chiefs of mission are particularly vulnerable to approaches by persons—frequently high-ranking host country officials—seeking intercession in visa matters. When making a recommendation for visa issuance to a post's consular section, the chief of mission and all other senior post officials must be particularly careful to avoid the appearance of pressuring visa officers regarding their factual determinations or the interpretation of governing statutes and regulations. By law, only properly commissioned and accredited officers may issue or deny visas.

Naturally, it is best to be discerning and selective in passing on visa referrals. Department of State regulations suggest using a standard written form for visa referrals. Among other things, this form notes whether the visa applicant is personally known to the individual submitting the referral and indicates whether the foreign policy goals of the United States are likely to benefit from the visa issuance. If properly monitored and administered, the visa referral system can be a useful method of expediting visa issuance in cases that involve U.S. Government interests, of preventing visa fraud and malfeasance, and of conserving scarce consular resources and time. A detailed discussion of the visa referral system is provided in Department cable 90 STATE 54208.

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## Slush Funds

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*You would like to install a new pinball machine at the chief of mission residence, but funding is unavailable. Therefore, you ask the Administrative Officer to sell the deep-freezer, which is old enough that it is not on the residence inventory, and use the proceeds to finance the new pinball machine. Is this proper?*

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No. On occasion, posts may be confronted with either the real or the perceived need to meet operating expenses that are not budgeted or that are insufficiently funded. Chiefs of mission should be aware that the unauthorized generation of funds to meet such needs through the disposition of U.S. Government property, renting of government property, currency conversions, and similar schemes is illegal. Such funds are deemed to be public money and may not be retained or spent without rendering an accounting for them, as required by law. All public money received regardless of its source, is to be accounted for in accordance with Department of State regulations set forth in Volume 4 of the Foreign Affairs Manual. Proposed gifts to the Department may be accepted only in accordance with the gift acceptance policy set forth in Volume 2, Section 960, of the Foreign Affairs Manual.

## Gifts and Decorations

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*As your assignment as Ambassador to Xanadu draws to a close, you are invited to a farewell ceremony at which you are told the head of government will present you with a valuable gift and decorate you with one of the nation's most prestigious medals. Can you accept?*

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You may accept the medal. Whether you may personally accept the gift depends in its value. Foreign governments may seek to bestow gifts and decorations upon chiefs of mission or other officers, especially on their departure from post. Gifts are also occasionally proffered during the visits of senior government officials such as Cabinet members. You should remember that U.S. Government employees (including their spouses and dependents) may not request or encourage the tender of a gift or decoration from a foreign government. Furthermore, under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, a U.S. Government employee may not accept or retain a gift tendered by a foreign government

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if it has a retail value in the United States of more than minimal value, defined as \$225 as of January 1, 1993. Unsolicited gifts of minimal value, including meals or entertainment, that are tendered as souvenirs or marks of courtesy may be accepted and retained. (For further information, see pages 3–5.)

Gifts of more than minimal value may be accepted only when it appears that to refuse the gift would cause offense or embarrassment or would otherwise adversely affect the foreign relations of the United States. Such gifts become the property of the United States and must be reported to the Office of Protocol within 60 days of acceptance.

In general, approval for the acceptance and retention of foreign decorations must be requested through the assistant secretary of your bureau or a comparable official. In the case of a decoration awarded to an assistant secretary or other officer of comparable or higher rank, approval should be requested from the Office of Protocol.

## **REPORTING WASTE, FRAUD, ABUSE, and MISMANAGEMENT**

You may, of course, encounter situations that do not exhibit the high standards of ethical conduct and personal integrity that are expected of government employees. Depending upon the circumstances, several options are available to you for reporting fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement.

### **Supervisor Notification**

One of the simplest and most direct approaches that you can take is to notify your supervisor of any information that you reasonably believe indicates wrongdoing. If the situation is unresolved after discussion with your direct supervisor, or if your supervisor is suspected of waste, fraud, abuse or mismanagement, you may wish to consult with more senior post or bureau managers or with your administrative or executive office.

### **Seeking Legal Advice**

If you are uncertain of the propriety or legality of a course of conduct, on the part of yourself or a colleague, you should consult the Department of State's Office of the Legal Adviser or ACDA's Office of the General Counsel for guidance. Such questions should be addressed by Department of State employees to:

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Assistant Legal Adviser for Ethics and Personnel  
L/EP, Room 4427A  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520-6417  
Telephone: 202-647-2350

and by ACDA employees to:

Office of the General Counsel  
ACDA/GC, Room 5534  
U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20451  
Telephone: 202-647-4621

## **The Office of Inspector General Hotline**

Department of State and ACDA employees and contractors, as well as members of the general public, may also report incidents of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement to the Office of Inspector General (OIG). You may report to the OIG Hotline any situation that you believe involves mismanagement or waste of funds, abuse of authority, danger to public health and safety, or any activity that constitutes a suspected violation of Federal law, including:

- Submission of false claims or fraudulent statements by employees, contractors, or grantees of the Department;
- Conspiracy to defraud the U.S. Government;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Concealment, removal, falsification, forgery, or alteration of official documents;
- Misappropriation or embezzlement of Federal funds; and
- Other serious violations or misconduct.

OIG operational controls are designed to protect the identity of Hotline sources. The identity of Hotline callers will not be disclosed unless the Inspector General determines that such a disclosure is unavoidable during the course of an investigation. Calls generally are not recorded; however, an answering machine will take your message during nonduty hours. You may also remain anonymous, if you wish, although your decision to do so may limit the scope of an investigation, particularly if the information given is insufficient and the investigators have no means of pursuing the allegation.

You may contact the OIG Hotline in several ways.

- The OIG Hotline number is (202) 647-3320. Collect calls are accepted. Calls involving classified or sensitive information can be made on STU-III secure phones to the same number. Hotline calls are received daily from 7:00

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a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. After hours, you may leave a recorded message, and your call will be returned when the office reopens.

- The OIG Hotline mailing address is:  
Office of Inspector General Hotline  
U.S. Department of State  
P.O. Box 9778  
Arlington, Virginia 22219
- Cables to the Inspector General by both Department of State and ACDA employees should be slugged “OIG Channel — State” and addressed to “Inspector General Only” to ensure confidentiality.
- You may visit the Office of Inspector General in Room 6817, Main Building, Department of State, 2201 C St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520.

You may also report information about wrongdoing or criminal activity involving the Department of State or ACDA directly to the OIG Office of Investigations, the General Accounting Office, or the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### Reprisals

The Inspector General Act of 1978 and other “whistleblower” protection statutes protect employees against reprisals for making complaints or disclosing information to the Inspector General, unless the complaint was made with the knowledge that it was false. If you believe that you have been threatened or harmed in any way as a result of such complaints or disclosures, you should contact the Office of Inspector General or request the Office of Special Counsel to review your situation. The Office of Special Counsel operates a special hotline for reporting reprisals and other prohibited personnel practices.

#### Office of Special Counsel Hotline

Toll-free ..... 800-872-9855

or write:

Office of Special Counsel  
1730 M Street NW, Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Requests for additional copies of this publication should be addressed to:

U.S. Department of State  
Office of Inspector General  
OIG/PPM/PRA, Room 6817  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520-6817

*Standards of Conduct* is also available to employees on the Department's INFOGUIDES CD-ROM. For information, contact:

U.S. Department of State  
INFOEXPRESS Coordinator  
A/IM/IS/OIS  
Room 1239 MS  
Washington, D.C. 20520-1239  
  
FAX 202/647-9419